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Book 1



SPEECH

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R. WICKLIFFE, JR.,

(OF KENTUCKY,)

DELIVERED IN THE

NATIONAL CONVENTION

OF THE

Whig Young Men of the United States,

ASSEMBLED AT BALTIMORE, MAY 4TH & 5TH, 1840

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SPEECH.

Mr. WICKLIFFE, having been selected by the Delegation from Kentucky, to address the Convention on behalf of that Commonwealth, spoke substantially as follows:

Mr. President:—An epoch has arisen in the history of the Whig party. For the first time within the last eight years, we present an undivided front. Hitherto, our strength has been wasted, and our numbers divided between rival candidates, from various quarters of the Union. In a party that was bound together by principle, and not by the strong tie of public plunder, it was natural to expect that men would entertain and indulge personal preferences, and be incapable of that rigid discipline and implicit obedience by which the adherents of power have ever been distinguished. The day of disunion and of defeat is past. Our party is now not only rallied around the same standard, but led on by the same commander. If the bravery of the troops be equal to the skill and gallantry of our veteran leader; if the war-worn soldier, covered with laurels in many a hard-fought battle, and decked with bays from many a civic field, be an object worthy of the gratitude and admiration of a generous people; if the genius of American liberty and the spirit of republican institutions be most fully embodied in him who is equally prepared to wield the sword or the plough; if this republic be not yet sunk in corruption and lost to all sense of truth and justice—victory, sure and lasting, awaits us and the great principles which we have so long struggled to uphold. For the brilliant prospect that lies before us; for the new life and zeal that cheer us and our constituents, we are indebted to the deliberations of the Harrisburg Convention. Called into existence by the unanimous voice of the whig party, and composed of some of the most gifted and venerable men of whom the republic could boast, its decree went forth and was received with applauding shouts by Whig America. To carry into effect the deliberations of that Convention; to secure the election of the

candidates whom it has nominated, and to enlist, in their cause, the youth, the genius and the chivalry of the land, are the objects for which this vast assemblage of the whig young men of the United States has been convened. The conscript fathers have declared that the republic is in danger, and have called upon us for assistance and relief. Let our zeal and alacrity in repairing hither; let our sleepless and unflinching efforts at home, proclaim that we have not been indifferent to the call. The American soil is a field upon which good seed was sown by our fathers; but the tares have appeared among the blades, and choked the grain. But the time of harvest is nigh at hand, and the people will bind the tares in bundles, to burn them, and gather the wheat into a barn.

Mr. President, the struggle in November next will be the mightiest that has taken place in this country since the civil and political revolution of 1801. They who hold the reins of government will not tamely surrender their ill-gotten and long abused power. It must be wrenched from their death-like grasp by the strong hands and stout hearts of an insulted and betrayed, but generous and patriotic people. The odds against which we contend, are truly fearful. On the one side, is the Chief Magistrate of the Union, with all the power and patronage belonging to the executive department of the Government. By means of the National Treasury and the countless officers in the service of the Administration, a standing army is raised and quartered in every corner of the country, and the watch-word conveyed with the utmost secrecy and despatch from the highest chieftain to the lowest vassal. To break down this formidable array, the people have brought forward a citizen soldier, unaided by the public purse, and unsustained by the public patronage. He holds not in his hands the national purse strings, to bribe and corrupt the people with their own money. He has not a hundred thousand office holders to drill and discipline his party. He appeals to his civil and military career, to the purity of his private life, grafted upon the principles of his public conduct. He relies upon his past history and his present poverty, as the best evidence of his honesty. He recalls to the memory of his countrymen, the long line of illustrious services which he has rendered the republic. He throws himself, for support, upon the firmness and patriotism of the nation; upon the great principles of constitutional freedom, and upon the integrity and intelligence of the mass of the people, with whose feelings and interests he is

so thoroughly familiar and identified. His talents, indeed, have been underrated, and his services depreciated. Impartial history, however, proclaims that he has not received, from his country, the rewards which he so richly deserves. Even in Athens, ungrateful as she was, it was not an unusual honor paid to those who had grown grey in the public service, to be feasted at the public expense. If skill and conduct in the cabinet; if valor and patriotism in the field, still meet with an echo from the hearts of the American people, the day is not far distant when a place in the Prytaneum will be awarded to the farmer of North Bend, and the hero of Tippecanoe.

Is it right, Mr. President, that one half of the intellect and virtue of this land shall be forever excluded from the councils of the country? Is it right that the Chief Magistrate of the Union shall continue to be the President of a party, and not the President of the people? How long shall we be whirled round this circle of miserable shifts and temporary expedients? What change can be a change for the worse? Did not the dominant party destroy the National Bank and force the country into the State Bank system? Did they not break down internal improvements of a national character, and impose that burden upon the States? And do they not now attempt to retreat from their own policy, and saddle the whigs with all the odium which its adoption has incurred? The Executive has continued to wage an unconstitutional war upon the credit, the commerce, and the currency of the country. His adherents have not only deprived single members of their seats, but sovereign States of their representation, upon the floor of Congress. His whole administration is marked by imbecility and corruption, in the Cabinet; by disasters and defeat, in the field; by a keen regard for the interests of the Government, and an entire neglect of those of the people. A new pilot is needed to guide our war-worn and tempest-tossed vessel through the shoals and storms that now threaten a political shipwreck, and that pilot is to be found on the banks of the Ohio. The farmer of North Bend has often steered the ship of State, but never did the stars of midnight find him, like Palinurus, asleep at the helm.

The whigs are charged with inconsistency, in having heretofore warned the country against military chieftains, and in now bringing forward for the Presidency, a veteran soldier, whose palmiest days have been spent in the camp, and some of whose brightest laurels have been plucked in the tented field. The ground, however, which they then took,

and which they now occupy, is precisely the same. A *mere* military chieftain is unfit to be the Chief Magistrate of this republic. His views of government are founded on the rigid discipline of the camp; he is too apt to regard the citizen as inferior to the soldier; and an unholy ambition too often leads him to rear his own greatness upon the ruins of his country. I will not, sir, disturb the retirement of him who reposes at the Hermitage. I will not pluck a single bay from that never-dying wreath which his victorious arms gained on the plains of New Orleans. I will not dwell upon the spots that stained his campaigns against the Indians in the South. Impartial history proclaims that he was a brave commander, but a poor civilian—a mere military chieftain, and elevated to the Presidency by his military fame alone. The miseries which his administration has brought upon this unhappy country, are so deep rooted and so wide spread, that after ages will scarcely believe that we could have endured or passed through them. Posterity will be incredulous that our people could have been so outraged and oppressed, and yet did not rise in rebellion; that our currency could have been so often stabbed to the heart, and yet was able to reel beneath the strong thrusts of the executive arm; that our commerce could have been so entirely prostrated, and yet was able to survive an almost universal bankruptcy and ruin. They will wonder that the spirit of our gallant army could have been so thoroughly broken, and yet struggled to outlive the disasters and disgrace by which its enemies hoped it would be overwhelmed; that the strides of executive power and national corruption could have been so vast, and yet that some sparks of independence still shone in the halls of Congress, and some rays of liberty still warmed the nation at large. They will thank Heaven that although the temple of the Constitution was sacrilegiously entered; its noble symmetry destroyed, and its fair proportions distorted; yet, that a few pillars and fragments remained, around which the friends of freedom rallied, and, recovering the remnants of the sacred structure, again reared it in all its ancient beauty and gorgeous grandeur. Who, however, is so well qualified to be the ruler of a free people, as he who is equally fitted to discharge the duties both of peace and war? Was not Milton right, when he said that *his* education was the most perfect, who was prepared to fill any station, either civil or military, to which he might be called by the voice of his country? If Gen. Harrison be a more elegant writer, a more powerful orator, and a more accomplished

speaker than Mr. Van Buren, shall we be taunted that he excels him also in couching a lance, in pitching a tent, and leading on the American militia to victory over the veteran regulars of Britain?

Mr. President, the terms of office should be in an inverse ratio to their powers and dignity. It is a principle founded on a knowledge of the human heart, and the tendency of human affairs. It was a vital part of the policy of ancient Rome, and was a main-spring of the greatness of that renowned republic. By the Federal Constitution, the President is chosen for four years, but no limit is fixed to the number of terms for which he may be re-elected. The father of his country set the example of serving only eight years, which none of his successors have dared, if they desired, to disregard. When Gen. Hamilton wrote in defence of the powers of the Executive, he construed those powers as they were really conferred by the constitution, and presumed that no incumbent would have the audacity or the consent of the people to stretch or transcend them. Had he lived in our day, he would not have compared them to the authority of the Governor of N. York, but would have likened them in many respects to the prerogatives of British royalty. The English monarch has an absolute, while our Chief Magistrate possesses only a qualified negative upon the acts of the legislature. Yet, since the reign of William III, what King of England has dared to veto an act of Parliament? If any member of the House of Hanover had presumed to exercise this alarming power half so often as it was exerted by the late President of the U. States, he would have shared the fate of Charles I, and have found, from experience, how few are the steps from the throne to the scaffold. Is not his whole cabinet frequently forced upon his Brittanic Majesty, and can any Prime Minister long withstand a majority in the House of Commons? What control does Congress practically possess over the Secretaries of the different Departments? What check do even the purse-strings of the nation enable it to hold over the President and his countless dependents? The Executive department, like Aaron's serpent, has swallowed up the rest. The tendency of the government is towards consolidation. The centripetal force of the system is too strong, and must be restrained. What is the occupation of the President, for the first term, but to lay his plans, train his followers, and secure his re-election for a second? Will he employ honest and talented men, when he can buy up heated partisans who will promote his self.

ish purposes! Will he be guided by patriotism and virtue, when he sees that bribery and corruption are more efficient engines of political power! Will he not be influenced by the popularity rather than the wisdom of his measures, when the strongest feelings and most powerful interests impel him to regard the permanence rather than the glory of his administration? I must here pause, Mr. President, and bow before the prophetic wisdom of Patrick Henry. Immortalized, by the first of modern bards, as the forest-born Demosthenes, his claims to never-dying renown, as a Statesman, will not be the less honored by the most distant posterity. His keen and far-reaching eye foresaw the dreadful arrogance and alarming usurpations of the Executive. His great mind pierced beyond the narrow horizon which bounded the vision of common men, and saw, behind the curtain of futurity, that baneful rapacity which has since stript and desecrated the fairest fabric ever built by the hand of man! I wish that the same warning voice which once thundered in the Virginia Convention, could now be heard in the remotest cabin in the country. Amidst the black clouds and lowering storms that darken the heavens, a rainbow has at length appeared. The enthusiasm with which the people have received the proposal to limit the Presidency to one term, and the moral certainty of General Harrison's election, are the harbingers that announce the approach of a political Millennium. Let this great principle, and the recorded promise of our candidate to carry it out, like the pillar which led the Children of Israel through the wilderness, ever be kept in the sight of the people.

Having retired from the army, after the return of peace, and served as Secretary and *ex-officio* as Lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Territory, Gen. Harrison was, in 1799, elected, by his fellow-citizens, their delegate in Congress. Although thrown into the national councils at a very early age, and surrounded by some of the brightest and most illustrious names that ever adorned the Senate House, yet he was not an inactive or undistinguished representative of the people. At that time, as ever since, the public lands were a subject of deep interest and vital importance in the western country. The national domain had hitherto been sold only in large tracts of not less than four thousand acres, and had been bought and monopolized by land-jobbers and speculators. The poor planter of the South, and the hardy yeoman of the North, were unable to purchase such a princely estate, and this heavy restraint upon emigration was equally grievous to the old as well as the

new members of the confederacy. To the patriotism of Gen. Harrison we are indebted for the conception, and to his energy and eloquence for the adoption of the law, as it now stands. In conjunction with Mr. Gallatin, he made a most eloquent and powerful report, in support of the Bill, and notwithstanding the violent opposition of some of the most distinguished men in Congress, it finally passed through both Houses. By this Bill, the public lands, instead of being offered in large tracts of four thousand acres, were exposed to sale in sections and half sections of 640 and 320 acres. No single law ever passed in Congress, has contributed more essentially to the interests and prosperity of the western country, and indeed of the whole union, than this maiden measure of our youthful statesman. The frosts by which the prospects of the poor emigrant had so long been chilled, were now dispelled by the bright rays of hope, liberty and independence. No man was now so humble as to despair of buying a home for himself and his family, and of owning the fee-simple of his little farm as perfectly as the proudest landlord in the nation. The tide of emigration, hitherto slow and small, now swelled, and has for nearly half a century flowed on, without the sign of a single ebb. Our wealth and numbers; the free spirit and manly independence of our people; the vast weight which the west possesses in the councils of the nation, and the boundless prospect of growth and grandeur that lies before us—all that we have, and all that we hope to be, may, in part, be traced to this memorable Bill. I would say of it, as an English Chancellor said of the Statute of Frauds, that "every letter is worth a guinea."

Mr. President, for thirteen successive years, Gen. Harrison was appointed Governor of Indiana. Deriving his commissions from Adams, Jefferson and Madison, his re-appointment was always demanded by the voice of the people. The delicate and responsible duties of this high station, he discharged in a manner eminently satisfactory to the people and the various Presidents by whom he had been chosen. Clothed with the extraordinary power of dividing the districts into counties and townships, and of giving, by his bare signature, a legal title to large tracts of land, to persons who possessed only an equitable claim, he had the amplest opportunities of accumulating a princely fortune. From Verres down to Hastings, the Governors of distant territories have been noted for peculation, public plunder, and every species of rapacity and oppression. Neither a Tully or a Sheridan, however, could

have found in the conduct of Gen. Harrison, the slightest room for denunciation or abuse. Possessing a most intimate knowledge of the Indian character, and deeply rooted in the good will and affections of the people and their representatives, he was the most popular and successful Governor that ever wielded the destinies of an American Territory. Under a commission from Jefferson, he concluded, with various tribes of Indians, not less than thirteen treaties, and secured to the United States more than sixty millions of acres. The greater part of the North-Western Territory was thus purchased of the Indians by his diplomacy, defended against the British by his sword, and peopled with a hardy yeomanry by the great Bill which, at the early age of twenty-six years, he passed through the American Congress. The advice of Iago to Roderigo, to buy more land and put more money in his purse, is a prudent admonition not disregarded by the officers of the present administration. Their salaries are not the only portion of the public treasure retained in their hands, and the silly man is laughed at, who commits a defalcation for less than a million. The same speculation and public robbery which a few years since damned a man to eternal infamy and the basest punishment, now commend him to favor and preferment. In the language of the Roman moralist:

"Multi
Committunt eadem diverso crimina fato
ILLE CRUCEM, pretium sceleris tulit, HIC DIADEMA."

Gen. Harrison's life has not been devoted exclusively to the West. Besides his services under Gen. Wayne, as Territorial Delegate, Governor of Indiana, Indian Commissioner, Member of the Ohio Legislature, and Commander-in-Chief of the North-Western Army, his career in Congress placed him prominently before the nation as a civilian, and was marked by an ardent devotion to constitutional liberty and the principles of the revolution. In December, 1816, Mr. Madison urged upon Congress the re-organization of the Militia, and this portion of his Message was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, of which Gen. Harrison was Chairman. On the second day of the session, he offered a resolution instructing the Military Committee to report a Bill providing, by law, for the relief of such of the officers and soldiers who, having served faithfully in the armies of the United States, were in distressed circumstances, and who, not having received wounds or disabilities, while in actual service, were excluded from the benefit of the

pension laws then in existence. This resolution, though not enacted into a law at that session, was enforced by Mr. Monroe in his first message; and, the whole subject having again been referred to a select committee, of which Gen. Harrison was a member, a Bill was reported, which subsequently passed both Houses, for the relief of the surviving soldiers of the revolution. Mr. President, to the paternity of this Bill, which stands upon the statute book a monument of national gratitude, Gen. Harrison is justly entitled. Many of those gallant men who had achieved the liberties of America, who had sacrificed their ease and fortunes in the cause of their country, and who were borne down by distress and the ruthless hand of time, were cheered and sustained by the timely relief of this wise and patriotic Bill. The surviving soldiers of the revolution found a friend and advocate in a brave General, whose tears had often mingled with their own, and at length obtained justice from a forgetful country, to whose liberality they had so often and so vainly appealed. Who does not regard, with equal pride and pleasure, this noble but long-delayed tribute to the bravery and patriotism of that gallant band, of which but a small fragment remains, and even that fragment totters on the verge of the grave? Who does not appreciate the elevated motives and lofty patriotism of him who conceived and carried through this measure, and whose heart beat high at the name of liberty, and in unison with her surviving defenders? Who does not enter into the grateful feelings of the revolutionary soldier, as he thanks his country for thus cheering the clouded evening of his days, and invokes the blessing of Heaven upon the patriot whose warm and devoted attachment to freedom and her defenders, has driven from his door the howling storms of poverty, distress and ruin? Who has not seen one of those venerable men, and marked the tear of gratitude as it trickled down his furrowed cheek? Who has not seen a smile play upon lips, where nought but sorrow sat before? Who has not felt his own love of country kindled afresh, when he thus beholds the treasure of the Union so generously applied to sustain the wounded and helpless defenders of freedom? And who does not envy the secret joy, the unalloyed happiness of the Statesman by whose expanded philanthropy and enthusiastic devotion to liberty, all these precious benefits have been secured? In a beautiful fiction of the sweetest of living poets, we are told that the Peri who, before she was permitted to enter the gates of Paradise, was required to bring the offering most grateful to the eye of Hea-

ven, at length obtained admission to the regions of the blessed, by bringing the tear of a repentant sinner. Next to this holy present, what offering more acceptable to the Powers above, and what passport to the gates of Heaven more certain, than the tear of the surviving soldier of the revolution, shed from overflowing gratitude for the noble friendship of their distinguished advocate, and the kind protection of a generous country.

Mr. President, the re-organization of the militia was a subject to which Gen. Harrison more than once invoked the attention of Congress, during the years 1817-18. He made an elaborate report, proving that the re-modelling of the National Militia was both desirable and practicable, and introduced a Bill to carry his views into effect. No one could have been better prepared to discuss this subject, and the plan which he recommended, although never carried into execution, bears the impress of his military genius and science. It is true that no action upon this subject could ever be obtained from Congress, and an amendment of the Constitution was perhaps necessary to warrant the passage of the Bill. Who does not know that whole companies and armies that fought in the late war came into the field without the slightest proficiency in military science, or the least skill in military evolutions? The liberties of this republic will be lost as soon as they are entrusted to a standing army. What would more speedily diffuse a national spirit and generous enthusiasm among the people; what would more effectually secure their devotion to the Constitution and to constitutional liberty; what would be more salutary in forming the principles and training the minds as well as the bodies of the young; what would more certainly check the thirst for wealth and growth of luxury; what would place citizens and communities on a more equal footing, in point of skill and strength; in a word, what would be a closer cement of union and a stronger fortress of resistance against foreign foes, than a well-armed, well disciplined and well-organized National Militia? A despot may rely upon his veteran regulars, because he is afraid to trust his subjects with arms to defend themselves; but the citizen soldier is the only true defender of a republic. Let Congress be roused from its apathy; let the militia be placed on the strongest and most stable basis that the constitution will warrant, and no bold usurper will ever be able to make upwards of fifteen millions of freemen the victims of his ambition and the instruments of their own destruction. And, although to the jaun-

diced eye of Europe, the Federal Constitution may, like that Tower immortalized by Dante, appear every moment ready to fall, yet it will for ages stand a curious monument for the instruction and admiration of posterity.

Few measures ever passed in Congress, shewed more clearly the sensibility of the nation with regard to the salaries of public officers, and its resistless power over her representatives, than the compensation law of 1816. However honest the motives and unsullied the characters of those who voted in favor of that law, the people disapproved the commutation of a *per diem* allowance into a stated salary, and neither talents or popularity could screen the majority of its advocates from public odium and political defeat. Although not a member of the House of Representatives when the Bill passed, yet at the very next session, Gen. Harrison, fresh from the people, warmly advocated its repeal. He did not wish to follow the aristocratic example of the British Parliament, and refuse all compensation to the Representatives of the People; he did not deny that a competent allowance was necessary to secure the talent and integrity of the Nation in the public service; but he was unwilling that Members of Congress should do justice to themselves before they had done justice to the sufferers of the Revolution. He refused to increase the pay of the Congress then in session, but, with equal delicacy and judgment, proposed to change the compensation, for the ensuing Congress, from six to eight dollars. His votes on this subject are a key to unlock the character of Gen Harrison, and to account for that poverty with which he has been so cruelly taunted by the parasites of power. He has walked honestly, as in the day. I know that his singleness of purpose is attributed, by political partisans, to a want of capacity, rather than to purity of character. After so many years of public employment, and so many opportunities of plundering the public and amassing a princely fortune, his proud boast is, that he is obliged to till the soil with his own hand. If, in the service of his country, the small remnant of his fortune should be sacrificed, and even that log cabin in which he lives should be sold under the hammer of the Sheriff, the noblest epitaph that can be carved on his tomb, will be that he was buried at the public expense. We read in ancient story, that Consuls and Generals, having retired from the public service, labored with their own hands to earn a scanty subsistence, and that delegations sent to summon them to the Senate House.

frequently found them with their hands upon the plough. But the age of Romantic patriotism and Patrician poverty is past.

Early in the year 1819, the attention of Congress was called to the proceedings of Gen. Jackson in the Seminole war. A report was made upon the subject, disapproving the trial and execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister. Resolutions were introduced by Mr. Cobb, of Georgia, disapproving the seizure of the posts of St. Marks and Pensacola, and the fortress of San Carlos de Barancas, and the invasion of the Spanish Territory. These resolutions produced a debate marked by the most signal ability and thrilling eloquence, and memorable in the political annals of the Republic. Among those who asserted the superiority of the civil over the military power, and the right of Congress to inquire into the conduct of the army and those who commanded it, Gen. Harrison was not undistinguished. Although himself a soldier, he knew that the greatest danger to a republic was the relaxation of its maxims of security, in favor of distinguished citizens, and especially of military chieftains. He boldly proclaimed that if the 'Father of his country' had authorized the seizure of the Spanish posts, he would have held him responsible for such a palpable violation of the Federal Constitution and of the Law of Nations. He admitted that the execution of Arbuthnot was correct, and did not deny that Ambrister deserved death. Having no doubt, however, that his execution was wrong, and that Gen. Jackson honestly erred in his powers over the Court, he called for a division of the question, and voted against disapproving the execution of Arbuthnot, and in favor of condemning that of Ambrister. Upon the resolution of the member from Georgia, that the seizure of the Spanish Forts was a violation of the Constitution, he voted in the affirmative. His course upon this delicate and important subject, was marked by the nicest judgment and the purest principles of patriotism—by a due regard for the fame and feelings of a gallant Captain, but an invincible reverence for the independence of the Legislature, the liberties of the people, and the Constitution of his country. Gen. Jackson was a man who never forgave a fancied injury or a supposed enemy. Twenty years glided away, after the debate on the Seminole war, but he did not forget the course pursued by the distinguished member from Ohio. He suffered no statute of limitation to bar his wrath, and nothing but the removal of Gen. Harrison could satiate his vengeance. The poisoned arrows of Executive malice fell

harmless at the feet of the citizen soldier. He was indeed removed from an office which he never sought, and which could add no dignity to his name, but he was not shaken in the confidence and affection of his countrymen. The President could not pluck the well-earned laurels that encircled his brow, or disrobe the Statesman and the soldier of the proud mantle which conscious integrity had thrown around his whole career. If it be permissible to carry our minds back to that period when the political horizon was first darkened by that black cloud which has since burst upon us with such relentless fury; if we could enter into the feelings and passions of Harrison and Jackson at the time; if we could perceive the vestal flame of patriotism animating the heart of the one, and the fires of suppressed hatred and ill-smothered vengeance bursting forth and raging through every vital of the other, methinks we would neither envy the power of the ruthless President, or pity the fate of the banished Minister. We would find the lines of Pope to be in point:

"And more true joy Marcellus, exiled, feels,
Than Cesar, with a Senate at his heels!"

Among the many slanders circulated against Gen. Harrison, there is one whose absurdity and grossness is only surpassed by the eagerness with which it has been spread by the hirelings of a party press. I allude to the charge of his having voted, while a member of the Senate of Ohio, in favor of selling white men into slavery, for debt. This, indeed, would have been a monstrous vote, equally repugnant to humanity and justice, and at war with the well known principles and long established character of the General himself. What are the grounds upon which this charge is founded—this *tabulum in naufragio*, which is to save the whole administration from a watery grave? A Bill to amend and revise the criminal code of Ohio is introduced into the Legislature of that State. It passes the House of Representatives and comes into the Senate, of which Gen. Harrison is a member. Heretofore all thefts, over ten dollars, have been punished by confinement in the Penitentiary, and the consequence is that these short imprisonments are unproductive and bring the Commonwealth into debt. The only mode of relief is to place the Institution under better management, and to diminish the number of small offenders. A clause is inserted in the Bill, increasing the minimum amount for the stealing of which a man shall be incarcerated, from ten to fifty dollars. The ques-

tion then arises, what shall be done with those who steal sums under fifty dollars? Shall they go unpunished? That would encourage petty larcenies, and give license to the lowest and most worthless vagabonds. Shall stripes be inflicted at the public whipping post? That is a cruel, degrading and notorious punishment, which, instead of reforming, makes the convict desperate and lawless. Shall they be thrown into a jail, that receptacle of vice, where criminals, of all ages, colors and sexes, are indiscriminately huddled together, and where the miserable inmates, contaminated by their own converse, swear fresh vengeance against the world, and plan new crimes before they have paid the penalty of those already committed? A proposition is made that the vagabonds by whom these petty pilferings are committed, shall be hired out to prudent and discreet persons, until, by their own labor, they have paid the fines and costs of prosecution. It is a most wise, humane and benevolent proposition, and if Howard, the philanthropist, had been a member of the Ohio Senate, he would have voted in its favor, and would have regarded its adoption as a most important improvement in the Penal Code, and a rapid stride in the cause of human liberty and social happiness. It did not subject the unfortunate debtor to the whim and tyranny of a griping creditor, but was levelled at infamous offenders, and, by a mild but efficacious punishment, placed them under a restraint equally wholesome for themselves and beneficial to their country. It would be strange, indeed, if he whose votes are recorded on the Journals of Congress in favor of the abolition of imprisonment for debt; whose boast and pleasure it was, in the field, to cherish and protect the poor soldier and wounded officer, and whose pride and glory it has ever been to espouse the cause of their widows and orphans, should have avowed a hostility or entered upon a crusade against the wretched and unfortunate. It required but little sagacity to see that a plain farmer might not himself forever be exempt from pecuniary difficulties, and might be the very first victim of the law which he had contributed to enact. He might have remembered the fate of that man who suffered death from the very guillotine which he himself had invented, and of him who was confined in the same labyrinth which his own hands had constructed. Othello's offence was not more magnified before the Venetian Senate, than has this vote of Gen. Harrison been misrepresented before the American people; nor was the defence of the noble Moor more complete and triumphant than the simple statement which this venerable patriot has

published in his vindication. Having said thus much of the civil character and history of Gen. Harrison, let us now acknowledge the services which he has rendered the republic on the field of battle.

When the youthful Lafayette left his native land—broke from all the endearments of the friendly circle and the family hearth, and gave up the ease and luxury to which he was born, to fight the battles of liberty on a distant continent, and to aid a handfull of oppressed colonists against the arbitrary power of the British realm, the world beheld an instance of heroic self-sacrifice and generous devotion to freedom, which it will be the delight of all ages to admire and applaud. The same spirit that impelled, and the same success that followed this glorious act of that illustrious personage, stamped with immortality the first essay in the service of his country made by that distinguished citizen whom the whig party has presented to the American people for the highest office within their gift. What, sir, are the military services of Gen. Wm. H. Harrison? The record of his fame fills one of the brightest pages in the History of the Republic. The renown of his name constitutes the common property of his countrymen. The son of a member of the first Congress and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, he was early trained in the genuine principles of sound Republicanism. Designed for the peaceful pursuits of professional life, his youthful ardor and patriotic ambition fixed upon the army as the theatre of his exertions, and led him into the active service of his country. The flame of the Revolutionary War had indeed been quenched, but the embers still remained. The British had not yet abandoned all hopes of conquering America. Under various pretences, they had refused to surrender the most important forts. From the principal stations, the Indians were bribed by British gold, and spurred on by British emissaries, to the most horrible butchery of the whites. The whole North Western Territory was exposed to the ravages of these ruthless cannibals. The burning of towns, the demolition of forts, the devastation of fertile fields, the murder of men, women and children, filled that vast region with terror and desolation. The defenceless borderers were massacred without regard to age, sex, or rank. Disaster and defeat attended our arms. A gallant army, under Gen. Harmar, had been routed and almost annihilated, at the Miami Village. In the very next year, Gen. St. Clair, with more than a thousand men, were destroyed by the confederated Indians under Little Turtle. The whole frontier was

thus exposed and defenceless; the Indians were victorious, in every quarter, and the whole country was filled with consternation and alarm. To repair our losses, and to retrieve our disgrace, Gen. Wayne was summoned, by the 'Father of his country,' to command the armies of the Republic. It was at this gloomy period of our National affairs, and during this defenceless condition of the Western Frontier, that a student, not yet twenty-one years of age, left his father's stately mansion, in Virginia, and repaired to the standard of his country. He came, as a volunteer, to offer his services in the defence of the Republic. The name which he bore was indeed honored and not undistinguished in the councils of his country. But the hardy veteran who had now assumed the command, was bred in a school that recognized no superiority but that of merit. The youthful patriot, with a modesty becoming his age, assumed a station suited to his experience. At first an humble ensign, bearing, with his own hands, that same American Eagle which was afterwards to wave in triumph over his head at Tippecanoe and the Thames, he was in time promoted to a Lieutenantcy, and by his skill and valor, having attracted the notice of Wayne, was at length appointed Aid du Camp to the General. I shall not follow the veteran Commander and his young Lieutenant through all the hard-fought battles of their long and arduous campaigns. I shall not enumerate the instances of fearless valor and consummate skill displayed by both, through the whole course of the war. I will not describe that glorious victory, gained by their united arms, at the Miami. The proudest monument of the gallantry and achievements of Gen. Harrison, is the noble testimony of his own brave commander: "My faithful and gallant *Aid du Camp*, Lieut. Harrison," (says that honest old soldier,) rendered the most essential service, by communicating my orders, in every direction, and by his conduct and bravery exciting the troops to press for victory."

Long before the beginning of the late War, the Indians, brooding over their disasters and defeats, had resolved to attack all the American settlements, and exterminate all the American people in the Mississippi valley. A Prophet had arisen up among them, who pretended to be inspired by the Great Spirit. Artful, cunning and treacherous, he added another instance to the revolting catalogue of human credulity and imposture. He was aided, if not instigated, in all his schemes, by his celebrated brother. Tecumseh was undoubtedly one of the greatest

men recorded in ancient or modern history. Equally devoted as a patriot and daring as a warrior, he had conceived the grand idea of uniting the Southern and North-Western Indians, in a confederacy, against the whites. The conception was worthy of a noble, generous and gigantic mind. It was enforced by him with an eloquence that would not have disgraced a Henry, and executed with a zeal and industry of which a Hancock and an Adams might well have been proud. Gen. Harrison was at that time Governor of Indiana. Aware of the schemes of Tecumseh and the Prophet, he determined to cut them off before they were ripe for execution. With this view, and at his own earnest request and that of the inhabitants of the Territory, he was authorized to attack the Indian station on the Wabash. Mark, sir, his consummate skill and Fabian prudence, in marching through that wilderness filled with ravines and narrow passes, and exposed as he was at every step to marauding Indians and deadly ambuscades. No defeat, like that of Braddock; no routs, like those of Harmer and St. Clair, disgraced his arms. He preserved his brave troops, free from every danger and safe from every assault, and with the profoundest caution and most consummate skill, encamped them, at length, securely, on the Wabash. Here, sir, was fought, the Battle of Tippecanoe, one of the most desperate and important engagements recorded in the annals of modern warfare. Here was crushed, in its bud, that grand and alarming scheme which Tecumseh and the Prophet had so long cherished. On that glorious field, the best blood of Kentucky was poured out, like water. It was there that the brave Wells and the veteran Owen died, in defence of their country. It was there that the gallant Croghan and his comrades, (afterwards so distinguished in the army of the United States,) first fleshed their maiden swords. But, above all, it was there that the gifted, the generous and the chivalric Daviess fell. The ornament of the bar and the pride of Kentucky; gifted with a brilliant fancy and a soaring genius; endowed with an eloquence that charmed while it convinced, he was one of the first lawyers and orators of his age. Fired with military ambition, and thirsting for military renown, his genius led him from the Forum to the Field. In the prime of life, and with all the knowledge of war that can be gained by study and in the closet, had he lived, he would have been one of the first military commanders that America has ever produced. He fell, but he fell, sir, like Epaminondas, in the arms of victory, and died with joy, because

he died in defence of his country. Kentucky was covered with mourning, and although her heart was well-nigh crushed by the loss of her darling sons, yet her generous soul perceived the advantages of the victory, and warmly acknowledged the gallantry and services of Gen. Harrison. A memorable event, planned with prudence, conducted with firmness, and followed by the most important consequences, the Battle of Tippecanoe is an evergreen wreath in the chaplet of our national renown. It was truly pronounced, by Langdon Cheves, on the floor of Congress, to be a victory which, in the best days of the Roman Republic, would have entitled a General to the honors of a triumph. It was justly resolved by the Legislature of Kentucky, that in the campaign against the Indians, on the Wabash, Gov. W. H. Harrison had, in their opinion, behaved like a Hero, a Patriot and a General; and, for his cool, skillful and gallant conduct in the Battle of Tippecanoe, well deserved the warmest thanks of the nation.

Mr. President: within the limits of my native State, yet live many of those gallant men who fought in the last war, and the number is still larger of those who recollect the enthusiasm with which the people of Kentucky volunteered and begged to be enrolled in the service of their country. The most respectable mechanics and substantial farmers; the most wealthy citizens, distinguished jurists and celebrated orators responded with equal zeal and alacrity to the call of duty, honor and patriotism. The commonwealth was turned into a camp, and nothing was to be seen but soldiers and parades. Upwards of seven thousand warriors flocked from this State alone, and appeared to the affrighted Indians, thick as the leaves in their own trackless forests. The question was not, who should be allowed to stay, but, who should be permitted to go! The leaders of those gallant bands were men, the mention of whose names will forever thrill the heart of every Kentuckian. When will the time come when Daviess, and Allen, and Hart, and Simpson, and Graves, and their gallant compeers, will not be cherished by a grateful and admiring people! Will the day ever arrive when the lamented Dudley will not find an urn in the hearts of his countrymen? Kentucky applies to her gallant sons the words of the deathless bard:

"O! if there be on this earthly sphere,
A boon, an offering Heaven holds dear,
'Tis the last libation which Liberty draws,
From the heart that breaks and bleeds in her cause."

Who, sir, was summoned to lead this North-Western Army, and who was invested with the command of these Kentucky troops? The Constitution of that State forbids the appointment of any person to the command of our militia who is not a citizen of the Commonwealth; yet, by the advice of Isaac Shelby and other distinguished men, the Governor gave Gen. Harrison a brevet commission of Major General in the Kentucky militia. The appointment was demanded by the voice of the Kentucky people, and joyfully hailed by the Kentucky troops. Let the successive captures of Fort Meigs, the invasion of Upper Canada, and that glorious victory achieved on the Thames, bear witness to the wisdom of the choice. Under Gen. Harrison, the Kentucky forces were led to victory and renown. They were never defeated, except in detachments under officers who disobeyed his orders and failed to execute his plans. Many of those brave soldiers are scattered throughout the limits of that patriotic Commonwealth. Their old commander is deeply rooted in their hearts. The remembrance of their common services and sufferings fills their minds with affectionate admiration and gratitude. They believe him honest and capable, and, in 1840, will support him with the same alacrity and zeal with which they defended his standard in the swamps and marshes of the North-Western frontier.

Mr. President: there is no character so pure as to be free from aspersion, and no fame so exalted as to be exempt from envy. Men have been found so insensible to truth and justice, and so corrupted by their own malignant passions, as to charge Gen. Harrison with the want of that courage which marks the soldier, and of that conduct which stamps the general. The massacre on the Raisin has been imputed to him. But does not every man who served in the campaign know, that Gen. Winchester advanced with his detachment to the Raisin without the knowledge and against the orders of the Commander-in-Chief? Was not Harrison perfectly surprised at the secrecy and confounded at the rashness of this ill-fated expedition? Did he not strain every nerve and make every exertion to re-inforce this unfortunate detachment? His orders to abandon Lower Sandusky have been ascribed to cowardice and a want of Generalship. But was not that Fort an exposed, distant and unimportant out-post? Was it not threatened with a siege by a large and powerful army, and was it not the policy of the General to concentrate his forces, so as to save the whole army from destruction and the whole country from invasion? Did not Croghan himself acknowledge

the propriety of his orders, and would he not have obeyed them had they been received in time? Was not the defence of Sandusky rendered a matter of desperate necessity, by the large parties of scouts and Indians who hovered around it, and was not its preservation a miracle which could not, with any reason, have been anticipated. The number of those who will find fault with Gen. Harrison's campaigns is larger than those who would have found it agreeable to have aided him in fighting them. He who shall go about the streets assailing the virtue of a patriot and the valor of a soldier, shall indeed not want hearers. But I would advise these *chimney-corner heroes* to be assured that their courage in peace is like fire in summer; to rest contented with their natural insignificance; to be informed that a generous Republic will never fail to honor and reward those who have led her armies to victory and guided her councils to glory and renown.

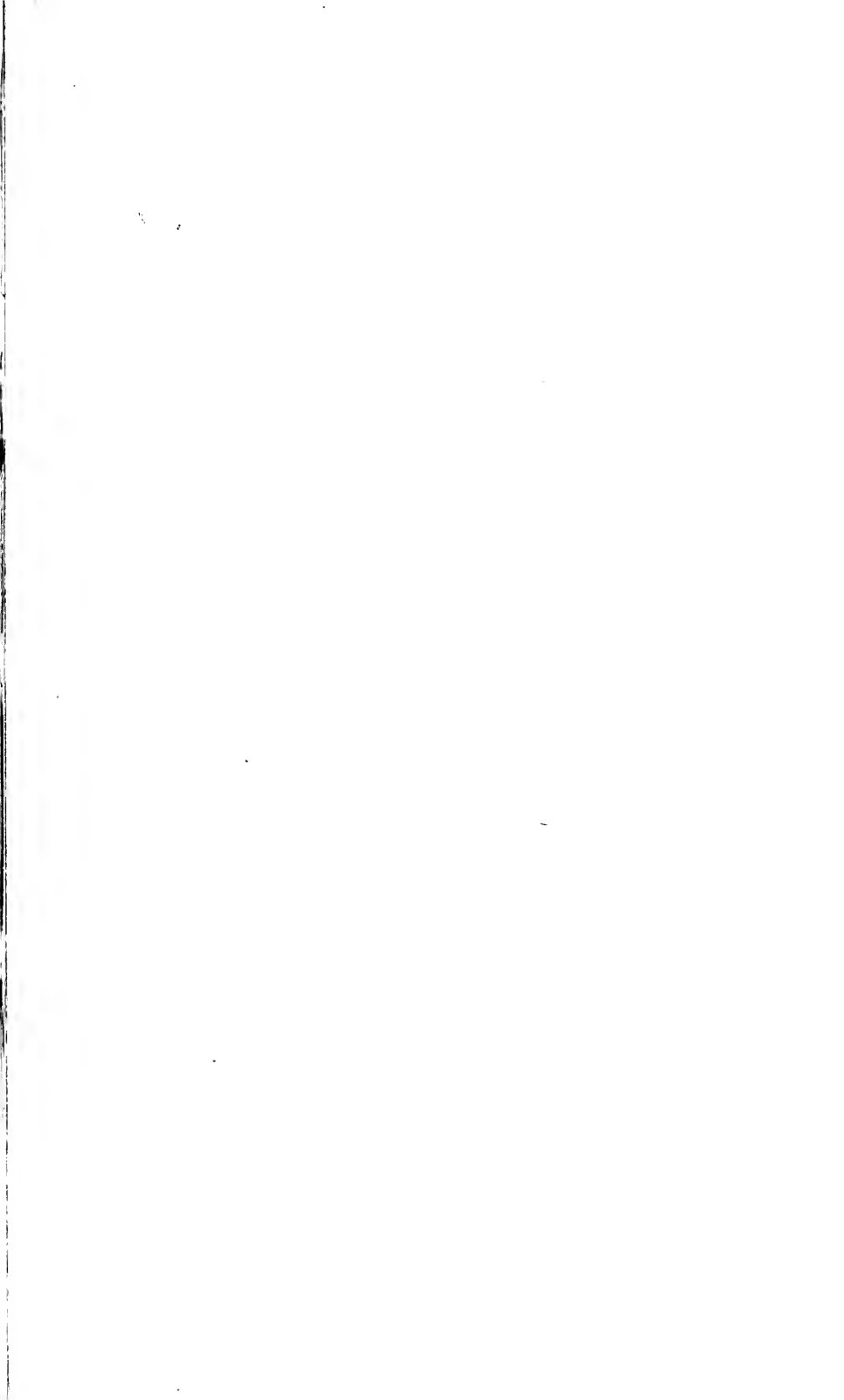
Mr. President: I have thus endeavored to defend the civil and military career of Gen. Harrison, and to advance, by pure appeals to reason and to history, his pretensions to the Presidency. His Generalship has been more traduced, and his talents more underrated than those of any man in America. The honors which have so long been deferred by a forgetful country, will now be heaped upon him with ten-fold interest. We support the man who holds in his pocket a commission from every President, from Washington down to the younger Adams; who has served in the highest stations, both civil and military, and discharged the duties of all with equal talent and integrity; who, by his energy and eloquence, as a member of the Ohio Legislature, Governor of the Indiana Territory, Delegate to Congress, Senator of the United States, and Minister to Colombia, defended the liberties and advanced the interests of his country. We support the man in favor of whose consummate skill and devoted patriotism a most important provision in the Constitution of Kentucky was suspended, and who, against usage and the fundamental law, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Kentucky forces in the North-Western Army. We support the man who fought the battles of Fort Meigs, Tippecanoe and the Thames; but above all, we support the man to whom has been confided the disbursement of millions, and yet whose fingers have never been soiled even with the gold dust from the public Treasury. Though the battle may every where else be given up, yet there is a "dark and bloody ground" where every blade of grass will be contested at the point of the bayonet.

If every other star shall fall from the political firmament, there is one bright luminary which will still career through the clear upper sky, with renewed heat and increased effulgence. If every other vessel shall founder amidst the shoals and storms that now threaten a political shipwreck, there is one gallant bark which will still ride on the billows, until it is at last anchored securely in the harbor of the Constitution. It was the boast of a great Marshal of France, when the armies of the republic were mowed down, by myriads, on the frozen snows of Muscovy, that he fired the last cannon in the last detachment of the grand army of the empire. If, in the assault which the whigs will make upon the strong fortress of Executive power and national corruption, they shall again be driven from the battlements and forced to retire from the glorious struggle, Kentucky will be the last to retreat—to surrender, she will never consent—and it will be her proud boast and eternal monument, that she fired the last cannon in the last detachment of the Grand Army of Liberty.

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